Manifesto Comes of Age

The victory scoreboard of the manifesto now includes 21 riding associations which have accepted the document as a resolution or endorsed it in principle. They are:

Burnaby-Seymour (B.C.), Brantford (Ont.), St. Catharines(Ont.), Spadina (TO,Ont.), Trinity (TO,Ont.), Don Valley (TO,Ont.), Eglinton(TO,Ont), High Park (TO, Ont.), York Mills (TO, Ont.), St. Paul's (TO,Ont.), Halifax(N.S.), Saskatoon City Park University (Sask.), Ottawa West (Ont.), Ottawa Centre (Ont.), Kingston(Ont) Parkdale (TO,Ont.), Dovercourt (TO,Ont.), Davenport (TO,Ont.), York North (Ont.), Peel South (Ont.), Regina South-West (Sask.).

Recent Strides

The Toronto ridings of Parkdale, Dovercourt and Davenport held a joint meeting with an attendance of 20, passing the waffle and electing four supporters as convention delegates.

York North, about 30 miles north of Toronto, passed the document with large support from its meeting, and Peel South, west of Toronto, also voted in favor of it.

Regina South-West provincial riding has accepted the waffle. Provincial ridings in Saskatchewan have been authorized to send resolutions and delegates to the convention.

The B.C. youth convention of Oct.11-13 also endorsed the manifesto.

The Watkins Tour

Mel Watkins spoke to social science students at the University of British Columbia Oct. 16, and addressed a meeting of about 150 NDPers in the evening.

The following day, he spoke to an NDP audience of about 100 in Regina. He also met informally with waffle supporters in both Regina and Vancouver.

Union Establishment Voices Opposition

The Eastern trade union establishment is now organizing actively against the manifesto. The union leadership is particularly upset about the debate shaping up around the question of industrial democracy, an issue dealth with in the manifesto but identified particularly with federal MP Ed Broadbent, who is not a waffle supporter . It has been established by informed sources that close to half the delegates at the convention may be from trade unions, a far higher proportion than at any convention in the history of the NDP.

The Marshmallow.....

The marshmallow, as we have nicknamed it, is a document which has been posited as a "constructive alternative" to the waffle by its authors Morden Lazarus of the Ontario Federation of Labour and Lorne Ingle of the United Steelworkers of America.

Messrs Lazarus and Ingle say the marshmallow is being submitted to the federal convention by affiliated locals of the retail, wholesale and department store union and "others".

The resolution starts off dramatically:

"Canadians everywhere have been cheered by the progress made by the New Democratic Party while consistently adhering to the basic aims stated at the founding convention and since--briefly, the building of a better Canada in a better, more peaceful world.

This optimistic tone in maintained throughout, along with uncritical praise of the NDP. The authors, for example, express pride in the party for advocating two per cent of Canada's national wealth production to help world development, in contrast with Lester Pearson's one per cent.

They are deeply concerned that Canada is losing its economic independance through foreign ownership and control, but they remind us:

"The New Democratic Party rejects narrow doctrinaire, too facile, all-too-simple approaches to the issue."

They advocate tools such as public ownership, aggressive investment policies, fiscal measures and direct controls, and joint public-private ownership, as well as the Canadian Development Fund already advocated by the party.

They express support for the economic organizations of Canada's working people, consumers and primary producers, and specifically call for expansions of the authority of marketing boards to achieve orderly merketing, "changes in the landlord and tenant laws" and rapid expansion of housing accomodation in the lower price ranges.

The removal of economic disparities has priority because "people must come first" and "the achievement of national unity and co-operation between Canada's two great language and cultural groups must be based on the elimination of inequities and the achievement of common goals, minimum economic standards and full opportunity for social and cultural development."

And Maple Syrup

Des Morton, a member of the Ontario provincial executive, has added a little maple syrup to the waffle with "a statement for social democrats" called "THE SEVENTIES ARE FOR SAVING CANADA".

The six-page statement is comprised largely of a genuinely moving description of the disintegration of Canada. Mr. Morton is concerned about control of our industry and resources passing into foreign hands, and Canadian policies serving interests "which are not our own."

We must save Canada and regain our national future, he says... "this is still a land where dreams can be made real."

But Canadians cannot repossess their economy "with dreams, nor by instant autarchy nor by buying it back for the people who sold us out in the first place."

Mr. Morton proposes a "massive", publicly-owned development corporation to give Canadians "a strong new voice in the growth of their country" and a national trading corporation to expand exports throughout the world. He also calls for a "massive" commitment in carefully chosen areas of science and technology.

He believes the survival of Canada depends on national "programs for people", in fields like housing, income maintenance, education and recreation. He accepts the "special position and responsibilities of Quebec within Confederation."

Mr. Morton is careful to distinguish himself from socialists in the party:

"Our radicalism lies less in our socialism--for these policies are usually the applied experience of other nation --than in our social democracy."

His is a nationalist appeal for gradual steps towards a "democratic revolution" in Canada.

His is a nationalist appeal for gradual.

Everyone wants to try it -----like the frug

The Globe and Mail reports that the NDP federal council may be asked by certain executive members of the party to present its own manifesto to the convention. Rumours have it that this manifesto is being written by these leading figures in the party establishment, and will be brought before the federal council meeting a couple of days in advance of the convention. The council has 110 members, among whom are a number of strong waffle supporters.

It takes Dough to make Waffles

We need some brown ($100), orange ($50) and olive ($20) bills to pay for publication of the waffle resolutions booklet, renting a hall for convention meetings, and past expenses of the waffle weekly.

Every waffle signer with a reasonable salary is asked to make a contribution to Information Services Fund,c/o Giles Endicott, 42 Chesterhill Rd., Toronto.

The Secret Sign is W

A three-finger victory signal, connoting a W, is being promoted by an active Ottawa waffler as a sign of greeting and good wishes within the clan. Attempts to create symbolic communications are common to all political cultures, so this phenomenon should be viewed with relative calm.

Notes from the Rank and File

The "Red Lobster of the East", writing from Pictou Nova Scotia, did not appreciate the Button Contest advertised in the last waffle weekly.

"Who was it that decided to limit our creative imaginations by unilaterally declaring buttons!" asked the Maritimer who countered with a call for armbands instead.

Although modestly claiming that he couldn't make up any good button slogans, our correspondant came up with such gems as:

"The Waffle Report-Defend Pancake Ideology"; "We Like Mel Waffle"; "J.Edgar Hoover Hates the Waffle"; "People's Pancake Power"; "Aunt Jemima Liked the Waffle". Oh, yes and last, but not least: "Marx Waffled".

Button suggestions from Phil Kandel of Toronto included: "Invest in Real Estate. Buy Back Canada! and "The NDP Wants Canada for Canadians.

A Massive Audience for Socialism

It was reported in the Toronto Star last week that the executive of the resolutions committee is considering having a major debate on the first principles of the party on Thursday night, Oct. 30. This debate may be covered live by both CBC and CTV networks, in which case a debate on socialism will be carried before the largest audience for such a discussion in Canadian history.

Advance Guard Moving In

Wafflers Jim Laxer of Ottawa and John Smart of Kingston will be in Winnipeg a week in advance of the convention. When waffle supporters arrive, they can get in touch with Jim at the Fort Garry Hotel to discuss strategy and other more mundane considerations.

SOLIDARITY FOREVER

The Manifesto has already succeeded in becoming the most important left venture ever directed toward a federal NDP convention.

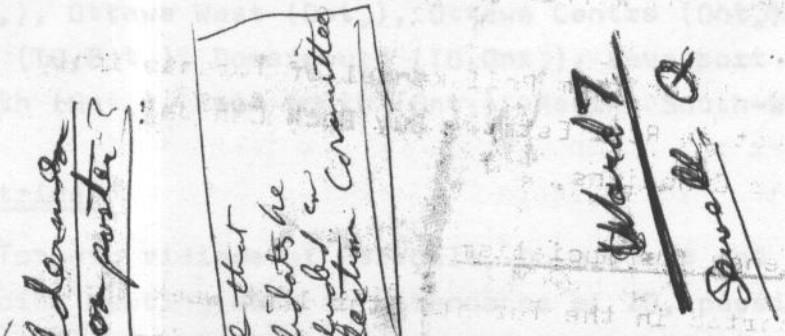
The response from party members, from the press and from our opponents in the party, who are now rushing to commit their first principle to paper, is a tribute to our success.

The Waffle will be the central fact of this convention. If our group stands firmly behind the principles enunciated in the manifesto, we will succeed in moving the party at Winnipeg.

And equally important, we will have built a base for a new kind of political activity on the part of party members: organizing in factories, tenants associations, co-ops and campuses.

The Winnipeg convention is our first objective.

Beyond it lies the struggle to build an independant and socialist Canada.



Watkins' Thoughts on the Waffle

Mel Watkins has committed himself to act as a representative of the waffle group on the party executive.

In a post-convention interview with Waffle News, Mel said he is there as a spokesman and not as an individual..."I wasn't elected vice-president for good behaviour, but because our group has got muscle, and I intend not to be co-opted."

Mel was surprised at the extent of waffle support at the convention (36% of the vote). Among convention accomplishments, he listed: the definition of a large left grouping, the influence of the left on the resolutions, raising the possibility that the NDP could become a catalyst for the building of a socialist movement, demonstration of electoral strength (eight wafflers among 20 people elected to federal council and one waffle vice-president). The vitality expressed in the convention debate is attracting new people to the party, he said.

"Now we have to prove we are serious, and this means a lot of work. As members of riding associations, we should work to make them into ongoing political action groups that relate to community problems (the sort of thing Gonick is doing in his Winnipeg riding). Having demonstrated our solidarity at the convention, we now have to show that we are strong enough to debate among ourselves. The original manifesto was too academic, too elitist, too rhetorical. New statements will emerge from the spring conference of the left. We should now prepare statements, pamphlets and perhaps a book to communicate with ordindary people."

Mel feels the NDP should relate to radicalism, not attempt to create it. The contradictions of our society are such that radicalism springs up in many places...among women, students, labourers, etc. "We want to demonstrate that the NDP can relate to such groups." Wafflers should join in the struggles going on in their communities, says Mel.

He says the media has portrayed him as leader of the waffle group because he was the original member best known to the press. "I didn't write the manifesto, and within the group my views don't and shouldn't receive disproportionate weight." Other persons will emerge as public figures as the movement builds, he says.

Fulltime Worker to be Hired

Manifesto supporters at the Winnipeg convention met as a group several times, with more than 200 delegates attending the sessions. These delegates decided to continue the group's activities, and a programmatic plan for the future was presented by Cy Gonick. Cy suggested the establishment of local and provincial committees across the country to continue the organizing and research activities of the left-wing group in the party. He further proposed that a national housekeeping committee be established, to be charged with the responsibility of convening a waffle-sponsored national conference to which all members of the NDP would be invited. The national conference would evolve the left program begun by the manifesto and its supporting resolutions and would deal with strategies for organizing the movement in Canada. This proposal was accepted by the Winnipeg group and the national housekeeping committee was set up and composed of the following people: Giles Endicott, Danny Drache, Mel Watkins, Andre Beckerman, Lorne Brown, Regula Modlich, Jim Laxer, Don Nicholls, and John Smart.

The national housekeeping committee met Nov. 16 in Toronto, and decided that if a conference to be attended by several hundred people is to be properly organized, a fulltime person would be needed to work on conference arrangements and communications between the various groups of waffle supporters across the country. The national committee decided to hire Jackie Brown (elected to the party federal council on the waffle slate and the women's slate) to work as conference convenor from Jan. 1 until the time of the conference, in May or June.

It was felt that at least $450.00 a month would be needed to pay Jackie's salary and provide her with the means to organize the conference. (That in itself involves physical arrangements, invitation of speakers, arrangement of a travel pool, circulation of papers in advance). The funds would also make it possible for Jackie to assist in the formation of local and provincial waffle groups across the country. Office equipment and supplies, mailing and telepone services will also dig into the money.

It was therefore decided to make an appeal to waffle supporters to make contributions to a fund for conference organizing. Past experience suggests that the best method for the donation would be in the form of six post-dated cheques, dated the first of each month from Jan. to June 1970. If the fund is to succeed, those who can afford it are asked to donate between $10 and $25 per month for the six month period. The national conference is of the greatest importance in continuing to evolve a left programme and organizing strategy for the NDP and achieving an independant socialist Canada.

If you are planning to make a contribution, kindly do so as soon as possible. Our decision to hire a full-time person is dependant on the results of our fund raising.

You are urged to send six post-dated cheques, made payable to: "Information Expenses Fund", c/o Jim Laxer, 335 Cooper Street, #54, Ottawa, Ontario.

Other Housekeeping Business

Non-monetary issues discussed at the housekeeping meeting in Toronto included a proposal by Danny Drache that a waffle sub-committee be set up to investigate a possible teach-in program for university campuses on the Americanization of the universities. Drache will set up an appropriate sub-committee which other wafflers are invited to join.

An Ontario study group to deal with provincial issues will be organized by Kelly Crichton and Gord Laxer. They will also undertake plans for a provincial waffle conference in the winter. (Gordon Laxer can be reached at 61 Marlborough Avenue, Toronto, Ont. for interested parties.)

Waffle groups are being set up in a number of Ontario cities and wafflers are urged to establish local groups wherever this has not been done.

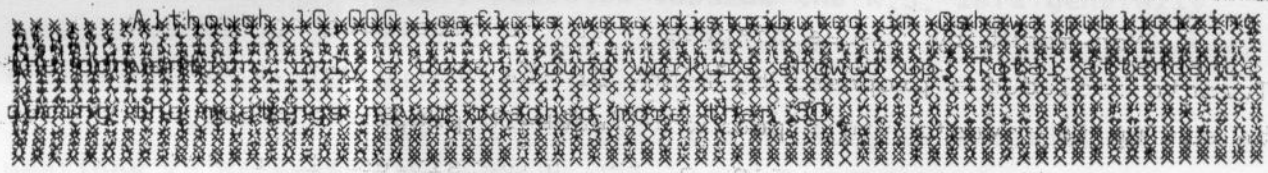
Mel Watkins and Jim Laxer were appointed co-chairm · of a sub-committee which will establish a federal study group to look into possible publication of a paper-back which would expound the views of the Manifesto.

Labor Lessons

The waffle resolution on industrial democracy was reprinted for delegates to the Ontario Federation of Labor convention in London by local 1000 CUPE on the grounds that it had been misrepresented by the press and deserved serious consideration by the federation.

Although the resolution never did come up for debate it received significant response from delegates. Among the 54 signatures of support attached to the resolution were those of Chris Trower, Grace Hartman and K. Cummings.

Meanwhile at the Young Workers conference in Oshawa, on the weekend of Nov.21, Mel Watkins emphasized that Canadian unions must be strong, radical organizations rather than simply nationalistic replacements for international unions.



Yet, another debate....

A John Harney-Mel Watkins debate at the St. George's riding association faculty club (U of T) drew 35 people recently.

 (p.5 missing from archive)

They were able to get 60% support for putting five women on the provincial council, but needed 66% to win. They ran a full slate minus candidates for the two top positions, and succeeded in electing some supporters to council and two ~~xxx~~ members of a waffle steering committee to executive positions. Most of the people on the waffle slate were defeated.

The nine-member steering committee selected at the convention has a number of proposals to consider, including: holding a Western regional waffle conference in the early spring prior to the national conference, publishing an Alberta waffle newsletter (which would include both waffle and other party news, because of the lack of any provincial party paper), and supporting province-wide seminars on pollution to be sponsored by Neil Reimer of the oil, chemical and atomic workers. They are planning to organize local waffle groups in Edmonton, Calgary, Lethbridge, and Red Deer, and possibly other communities.

Nova Scotia Plans...

Wafflers in Nova Scotia plan regional meetings in Halifax, New Glascow, Sydney, Troro, Port Duff rin and other major centres. These sessions will focus on: interpretations of the waffle and the convention, questions relating to participation in the waffle group, setting up of local committees to co-ordinate extra-parliamentary activities.

A Nova Scotia waffle newsletter will be set up, with Bruce Archibald as editor, directed towards the N.S. left generally. It will serve as a communications link between any local co-ordinating committees that are set up.

Wafflers there hope to hold one meeting or a series of meetings to determine Nova Scotia strategy for the spring waffle-sponsored conference.

They are also helping to plan a conference on structural underdevelopment in the Maritimes, anticipated for the spring.

Ottawa Committee Formed

Ottawa wafflers met Nov. 17 to set up a three-member steering committee which will organize future meetings and co-ordinate waffle activities in the nation's capital. A discussion of organizing strategy resulted in the division of the group into three committees which will present papers on labour organizing, community organizing and educational work within the party. It is hoped that a general strategy for this area will be formulated at the next meeting, set for Dec. 4.

Newsletter Revamped

Waffle News is the post-convention Waffle Weekly with a new format to suit the purposes of an ongoing left group. Communication of events is one function of the new newsletter; another is communication of ideas, organizing strategies, and issues that require action.

Tracy Morey and Krista Maeots have been appointed editors by the national housekeeping committee. The editorial board is composed of all Ottawa wafflers who work on the newsletter.

Contributions of short articles, statements and editorial letters from wafflers across the country are both welcome and necessary. Material should be sent to Tracy Morey, 118 Wurtemburg, Ottawa.

Waffle News will be published monthly until two months before the spring waffle conference, then weekly again.

The names and addresses of supporters who are not now on our mailing list should be sent to Krista Maeots, 335 Cooper St., Apt. 54, Ottawa.